

A COMPARISON OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES BETWEEN EGYPT AND CHINA

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ABSTRACT

China has achieved a great success in rural development. After 30 years of effort, the number of poor people in China's rural areas has been decreased to 26.88 million by the end of 2010 from 250 million in 1978, And the government has been increasing its investment in the rural areas and agricultural sector, and of course all this have been reflected on the level of development in the rural areas. Rural development in Egypt has a long history traced back to the nineteenth century. This study was undertaken to analyze rural development Strategies (RDS) in Egypt and China. The goal of the study is to understand some of the underlying strategies that have been implemented in the two countries during the period 1949 to 2007, and also to identify the current situation in both countries through the case study method by analyzing the rural development situation in two villages, Kafr wahb village in Egypt and Shijiaqiao in China to examine the positives and negatives aspects in both villages.

KEYWORDS: Rural Development, Rural Development Policy, Policy, Rural Communities

INTRODUCTION

Whereas researchers, planners and governments in Egypt and China have examined changes in the rural sector and devised various development strategies, few have compared and contrasted such approaches in order to gain greater insight into their applicability within various contexts. This study attempts to compare the rural development strategies between two different countries, Egypt and China. This paper has been divided into four major sections. In the first section the purpose and objective of the research is presented, followed by the methodology of the research in section two. A chronological presentation of the major rural development policies and programs initiated in the two countries, especially since 1949 until now, is provided in section three. The final section compares the major findings obtained from field study to identify the positive and negative features that exist in the study areas.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF RESEARCH

This study compares the rural development strategies adopted by Egypt and China during the period 1949 – 2007 and also the current situation in both countries through the case study method by analyzing the rural development situation in two villages, Kafr wahb village in Egypt and Shijiaqiao in China to examine the positive and negative aspects in both villages.

The main objectives of this research project are:

- To identify the types of rural development policies that have been used in Egypt and China and to understand the philosophies underlying the adoption of such strategies;
- To explore in detail some of the more important strategies presently followed in both places using case studies;

- To identify the problems which exist in the case study area, and the proposed solutions for these problem.

METHODOLOGY

Both secondary and primary data were collected for the study. The latter involved oral interviews and survey questions. A comparative analysis of data from both study areas was attempted. The rationale underlying this comparative analysis approach is to understand or identify the positives and negatives of rural development strategies, and dominant causal forces (political, economic, socio-cultural, etc.) that have influenced these strategies in the study area. This study used data obtained through the survey questions, oral interviews, annual reports of the various departments on the various development strategies, and field observations for the comparative analysis of the study areas. The comparative analysis of this study was conducted under three major sub-heading:

- Comparative analysis of the history of rural development in Egypt and China during the period from 1949 until now.
- Comparative analysis of rural development strategies in the case study areas.

CHRONOLOGICAL PRESENTATION OF MAJOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES IN EGYPT AND CHINA

China's Rural Development Policies Since the 1950s

Until 1949 land own in rural areas of China has been based on collective ownerships. Immediately after China's 1949 revolution, a very important land reform changed the land tenure giving land ownership to the tenant farmers (Xiwen, 2009).

Beginning in the mid-1950s, however, Mao introduced collective farming, moving ultimately to compulsory and very large collective farming units—the giant communes of the Great Leap Forward. After that much smaller collective units, based on the residential rural community or “production team” were introduced, and remained the norm until the late 1970s. In a process that began in 1978 and was completed by 1984, China then became the first collectivized agriculture to close its collectives and return to individual farming, under the “Household Responsibility System” (HRS) (FAO, 1999).

During the past 50 years, China's leaders experimented with various measures to develop the country's rural areas. In the pre-1978 period, these measures were usually implemented in the form of mass mobilization campaigns, associated with various political and ideological movements. After the 1978 reforms, the measures consisted of legal and institutional reforms, as well as large-scale infrastructure projects - mainly by the central government (the so-called capital projects) (Fan, et al., 2002). We can distinguish the following 2 periods of rural reform in China (Table 1).

First Phase (1949- 1978)

Land Reform (1949-1952)

One of the first measures after the Revolution of 1949 and the establishment of the People's Republic of China was the large-scale land reform in which the previous feudalistic system of land ownership was abolished (Liang, 1987). In some sense, it was a present from the new leadership to the social group, which had supported the revolution more than any other group in the society. For the first time in Chinese history, millions of previously landless families in rural areas got access to their "own" land. Immediately, this improved the situation in the countryside (Banister, 1987).

Collectivization (1953-1957)

In 1952, a campaign started to combine the small-scale farmers into cooperatives. However, what started as

voluntary movement, soon evolved into a regular collectivization campaign (Fei, 1998). Farm operations were increasingly organized according to a top-down command and control model – not unlike the organizing principle that was applied in the large-scale industrial areas introduced at the same time. Fortunately, in this early period of collectivization, most of the farmers still had some "private" land for their own food production. They could also sell the products on free markets. Unsurprisingly, the yields on these small plots were much higher than on the collective land. In that period agricultural production increased significantly (Chen, 1994).

Great Leap Forward, Agricultural Communes (1958-1962)

Inspired by the Soviet model of large-scale agricultural and industrial operations and encouraged by the initial success of collectivization, Mao Zedong and the top party leadership initiated the campaign of the "Great Leap Forward" as a measure of radical renewal (Liebertal, 1995). Its main idea was to speed-up China's industrialization and rural development within a short period through the mobilization of the masses (Ashton, et al, 1984).

Agriculture was organized into communes with large-scale production units and detailed central planning and control. Beginning in 1958, the relatively small agricultural cooperatives of about 200 families were mixed into increasingly larger communes with, on average, some 5000 households (Banister, 1987). They were led by party functionaries, who were selected according to revolutionary enthusiasm and loyalty, rather than agricultural expertise. The central government strictly controlled agricultural inputs, set the quotas for production output and controlled the prices (Becker, 1996).

Undevelopment Control (1963-1978)

When the central authorities finally became aware of the "Great Leap Forward" disaster, they abolished some of the organizational arrangements that were responsible. Most importantly, they eliminated the central planning and control structure in the agricultural sector and replaced it with a more local authority (Heilig, 1999). It was given to small production teams of only 20 to 30 families. With their local expertise, these teams quickly increased agricultural production. For a few years, the situation in rural areas improved. But the central principle of state-controlled agricultural production remained in place; farmers were essentially rural laborers who worked for the government, which controlled markets, inputs, and the assignment of technology. Accordingly, the farmer's motivation was low and mismanagement widespread (Lee and wang, 1999).

With the Cultural Revolution, another attempt was made to shape the Chinese society according to the utopian principles for a communist society. This time, the campaign was mainly targeted on urban intellectuals, who were considered enemies of society (Fan, et al, 2002). The agriculture, which had hardly recovered from the "Great Leap Forward" disaster, was again put under strict central control. The government procurement agency essentially regulated all agricultural inputs and outputs. Under the pressures of re-established command and control, the farmers had no incentive to develop own initiatives. Productivity remained low and the agricultural output increased only slightly (Tian, 1999).

Second Phase (1979- Now)

Introduction of Family Farming (1979-1984)

After more than two decades of poor agricultural performance, the Chinese government finally realized that a centrally planned agriculture would not be able to remove poverty in the rural areas and would not provide a stable food supply for the country (Xu and wang, 1997). The reform came in three steps: First, the principle of central planning was gradually abolished. Farmers were again allowed to cultivate private plots and sell the products on the re-opened free

markets (as was the case in the early 1950s) (Fewsmith, 2002).

Most of the agricultural output was still controlled by the state procurement agency but the government raised procurement prices for agricultural products in order to provide higher incentives to the farmers for increasing production (Fleisher and chen, 1997). In a second step, the system of agricultural communes was removed. The individual farm household became the central production unit. It was called the "household production responsibility system" (Mody and wang, 1997).

As long as a farmer could fulfill the production quota for grain, he could decide what to grow. Farmers were also free to sell the surplus on the free market. In a third step of reform the government began to reduce the number of agricultural commodities in the state procurement system (Wei, 2000). Consequently, the farmers could sell more and more of their products on the free market. This greatly motivated them to increase productivity (Yao, 2001).

With these reforms, China essentially introduced family farming and the "free market" principle (with the only exception of a few strategically important commodities, for which the state buying system still set the prices). The result was not only an unprecedented increase in agricultural production but also cancellation of diversification in commodities (Chen and davis, 1998).

Within a few years, the markets in China were full of vegetables, fruits, fish, and various types of meat - and flowers, indoor plants and numerous other agricultural products. The farmers had quickly understood market mechanisms and tried to maximize their income by identifying profitable niches in the food market (Zhao, 2001).

During that phase of economic reforms, another development measure was introduced, which completely transformed many rural areas in China: the so-called "township and village enterprises". While there was village industrialization before 1978 (such as the notorious steel mills of the "Great Leap Forward"), it all failed miserably. Only the post-1978 economic reforms created an environment, in which a rural manufacturing industry could flourish (Parish, et al, 1995).

The key-factors were foreign investment, export orientation and the availability of a huge labor surplus. Because of the productivity gains in agriculture, less people were needed in that sector (Lu, 2001). This excess labor was absorbed by the newly created township and village enterprises. With extremely low labor costs, these enterprises were highly competitive in certain global export markets, such as the textiles and electronics (Jian, 1996).

When the government granted more autonomy to these enterprises and even allowed privatization an unprecedented development took off in China's rural areas. In 1978 the rural non-farm GDP contributed some 4% to the national GDP; in 1997 it was 28.2% (Fan, et al 2002, 9). In 1978, only 2.2 million people worked in China's rural industry and service sector; within less than 10 years their number increased to 13.5 million. Fan (and colleagues) have calculated, that *"in 1997, GDP produced by rural industry in China was larger than the GDP of the entire industrial sector of India"* (Fan / Zhang / Zhang, 2002).

Price and Market Liberalization (1985-1989)

The boom of the first phase of agricultural reforms lasted only five years. By the middle of the 1980s, signs of a crisis in agriculture were obvious (Bao, 2001). The overall economic boom that was triggered by the 1978 reforms had pushed up prices for fertilizers, energy, machinery, and other agricultural inputs. The profit margin for the farmers was shrinking because state procurement prices were still quite low and the free agricultural markets were saturated (Kojima, 1996).

The core problem of the agricultural slow down in the late 1980s, however, was the still existing state procurement system with its production quotas, which forced the farmers to allocate much of their production to products with low profit margin. The boom in the non-farm sector also contributed to the agricultural stagnation. Especially young people left agriculture and found much better paid jobs in the village industry (Aziz, 2001).

Recent Reforms: Structural Improvements (1990 - Present)

Since the early 1990s, China has introduced various measures to further liberalize the agricultural markets and reduce the number of commodities in the state controlled procurement system (Mallee, 1995)). "In 1993, more than 90 percent of all agricultural produce was sold at market-determined prices, a clear indication of the degree to which China's agriculture had been transformed from a command-and-control system to a largely free-market one" (Fan, et al, 2002)). This triggered an unprecedented increase in agricultural production, which proved all those wrong, who had thought that China was captured in a Malthusian trap (Lee / Wang, 1999).

While this last wave of reforms further improved economic conditions for the Chinese agriculture it could not stop the gap in economic growth between rural and urban areas from widening. In the relations of rural and urban areas we can distinguish three phases in the post-1978 reform period: Between 1978 and 1993 the rural areas were in the lead; between 1993 and 1997 both the rural and the urban areas had a period of rapid economic development; but after 1997 the rural areas began to slow down, while the urban areas continued their vigorous economic growth (Demorger, 2001).

During the period from 2007 until now and under the impact of the international financial crisis, China finally recognized the great importance of effective domestic demand on economic growth. In order to stimulate consumption, a series of policies were proposed. The No.1 file released by the central government was the Proposal on Advancing Reform Development in Countryside. It proposed 28 measures to advance agriculture development.

The file proposed a financial system reform, setting and improving land markets, speed the development of small- and middle-scaled regional banks, emphasizing the need to support credit in the countryside, supporting the development of cash crops, increasing agricultural subsidies, increasing the lowest grain procurement prices, employing more rural migrant workers in fundamental-facilities construction, helping rural migrant workers in unemployment, making more people gain benefits in employment policies and completing collective forest rights reform in five years. Public opinion considers these measures as a new dynamic force towards the development of rural areas (Guangjin, 2012).

In summary, this is only a rough overview of some of the main phases in China's rural development policy. However, it still allows us to draw an important conclusion: China's rural development campaigns before the institutional reforms of 1979 were all based on the faulty assumption that a centrally planned (agricultural) economy is possible.

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Table 1: Major Political Events and Rural Policies in China Since 1949

Period	Political events	Major policies
1949- 78	Socialist land reform (Agrarian reform) Cooperative movement Great Leap Forward” movement Readjustment period Cultural revolution	Specialized production Free market allowed Compulsory commandism for demand and supply, No free market, Grain self-sufficiency for major agricultural products Very low prices for agricultural products, Commune system
1979- Now	Economic reforms The market – oriented reform Adjustment in rural policy The implementation of many laws and regulations regarding labor relations and Advancing Reform Development in Countryside.	Relatively higher prices for agricultural produce, Free market encouraged, Specialized production encouraged, cancellation of the Commune system, Various kinds of production responsibility, especially household responsibility systems Focused on economic growth in urban areas Increasing peasants’ income, cancellation of agricultural taxes, subsidize farming, Implement a new rural cooperative health care system financial system reform, hastening the development of small- and middle-scaled regional banks, support credit in the countryside, supporting the development of cash crops, increasing agricultural subsidies, increasing the lowest grain procurement prices, helping rural migrant workers in unemployment

Compiled From: Liang (1987), Banister(1987), Fei (1998), Chen (1994), Liebertal (1995), Ashton, et al (1984), Becker (1996), Heilig (1999), Lee and wang (1999), Fan, et al (2002), Tian (1999), Xu and wang (1997), Fewsmith (2002), Wei (2000), Yao (2001), Zhao (2001), Lu (2001), Parish, et al (1995), Jian (1996), Zhang (2002), Bao (2001), Kojima (1996), Aziz (2001), Mallee (1995), Fan, et al (2002), Demorger (2001) and Guangjin (2012).

EGYPT’S RURAL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES SINCE THE 1950s

The stages or historical periods which experienced by rural development efforts in Egypt can be summarized in four periods as follows (Table 2):

The First Phase (1949 - 1951)

At this stage was the creation of the Ministry for Social Affairs and for the first time included a section for peasant and it has taken upon itself the idea of rural social centers. So it established five centers in 1941, and six centers in 1942, and then stopped expanding in the establishment of these centers to the unavailability of sufficient funds (December, 1995).

In 1942 the Minister of Health issued a law whereby a State adoption of a specific commitment in the budget for health extension programs for peasant (Effat, 2002).

It also established agricultural units to provide agricultural extension services to farmers , and in 1946 the Ministry of Trade and Industry established A Department of Small Industries , which focused on the establishment of training centers for industrial Artisan in urban and rural areas , and after the outbreak of the Second World War the state began to expand in the establishment of cooperative consumer societies with the deployment of agricultural cooperatives (Center for Studies political and Strategic , 1998).

Thus emerged rural services clearly and varied forms, the government has formed a higher committee, its primary purpose is to combat poverty , ignorance and disease , and this Committee has developed a program to coordinate services

and published in the Egyptian countryside over eight years, which was created a community center in every village, and " Menouf " district in Menofia governorate has been selected to be the first , then successively create the rest of the community centers and health groups and agricultural units (Saad , Fawzy , 2001).

Second Phase (1952 - 1960):

At this stage, a law of agrarian reform was passed specific ownership of agricultural land, followed by a series of reform operations, including unification of the primary education system and the cancellation of separation between rural education and other educational systems, and implementation of the project of generalization of safe drinking water in rural areas (Peter, 1991).

The Government has established the Permanent Council for Economic Development and the Permanent Council of the Public Service in 1953 to give a bush to the service programs, especially in the countryside. And the unified Cooperation law was issued in 1956 to give a push for the efforts of the cooperative movement in the field of development and general cooperatives conferencing (Khadija, 2001).

Third Phase (1961 - 1994)

This phase witnessed the implementation of the central planning policy during the period (1960 - 1973), and during this period the state relied on the agriculture sector in the financing of development in other sectors(Mustafa , Salah , 2002).

The state has focused on the spread of educational and health services in the countryside, but not enough attention is given to infrastructure such as roads and electricity. Then a law of local administration was issued in 1960, which allowed for the first time the participation of citizens in the planning and implementation of projects, as This period witnessed the emergence of the representatives of peasants and workers for the first time in the National Assembly after the constitution give them 50% of the seats in the Council (Qanbar, 1995).

The experience of construction and development of Egyptian village organization is considered the most prominent thing that the state witnessed in this stage with regard to rural development , which has established in 1973 (Ministry of Local Administration , 1997).

Forth Phase (1994 - 2007)

In this period the Egyptian countryside witnessed a large number of projects and programs, which sought to bring about economic and social changes, but the most important of these programs was the "SHOROK", as a national program for integrated development, based on government participation and popular participation of people in order to actual rural renaissance (Institute National Planning, 2006).

In this program 26 local units has been selected by a local unit in each province gradually increased every year in order to the program covers all local village units which counted 1064 units, comprising 4,600 village followed by 22000 small villages within 7 years to enter the next century, a new and sophisticated (Kazim, Abu Tahoun, 2008) .

Fifth Phase (2008 - Now)

During this stage, the focus was on axes of human and institutional development of the village, with the continued intensification of attention to economic development, but with the increase in size of the contribution of the People in achieving the economic development, and it was the first time during this phase regarding confirmation of the popular concept of development (Khadija, 2001).

In summary, rural development in Egypt has evolved during the last five decades across two main strategies; the community and integrated development. However, there is a trend emerged since the mid nineties to shift into the sustainable strategy but on limited and rather experimental scale. Yet, the integrated approach of development still has the prevalence over other strategies. Egypt's rural development policy depended on the social affairs movements in the beginning period which was in the 1950s, after that the agrarian reform policy was adopted, then the economic liberalization which witnessed The issuance of local administration Law and the issuance of construction and development of the Egyptian village organization and finally, the adjustment in rural policy which witnessed the first national program of rural development called (SHOROK) and emphasis on the concept of popular participation.

Table 2: Major Political Events and Rural Policies in Egypt Since 1949

Period	Political events	Major policies
1949 - 51	Social affairs movements	Establishment of the Social affairs ministry, launched the agricultural units, launched the social rural centers
1952 - 60	23 July 1952 Revolution	The issuance of the Agrarian Reform Law, building the high dam, carrying out the project of safe drinking water in rural areas
1961 - 1994	Economic liberalization	The issuance of local administration Law, launched the construction and development of the Egyptian village organization
1994 - 2007	Adjustment in rural policy	Launched the first national program of rural development called (SHOROK)
2007 - Now	Human and institutional development	Popular Participation, economic development

Compiled From: Moharam (1995), Effat (2002), Center for Studies political and Strategic (1998), Saad and Fawzy (2001), Botrous (1991), Khadija (2001), Salah (2002), Qanbar (1995), Ministry of Local Administration (1997), Institute National Planning (2006), Kazim and Abu Tahoun (2008) and Khadija (2013).

COMPARITIVE ANALYSIS OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN STUDY AREAS, THE MAJOR FINDINGS

This section compares and contrasts the two study areas in terms of their development trends, strategies, goals, areas of focus, scale and underlying problems of policy implementation, it can be summarized in (Tables 3- 11):

Table 3: Number of Population and Number of Family Members

Village	Number of Individuals			Number of Families
	Male	Female	Total	
Kafr Wahb	717	710	1427	351
Shijiaqiao	351	364	715	260

Source: Compiled from Field survey

Table 4: Number of Farming Population and Farming Households

Village	Farming Population			Farming Households
	Male	Female	Total	
Kafr Wahb	232	221	453	184
Shijiaqiao	228	254	482	194

Source: Compiled from Field survey

Table 5: Number of non-Farming Population and Non- Farming Households

Non-Farming Population				Non-Farming Households
Village	Male	Female	Total	
Kafr Wahb	509	465	974	167
Shijiaqiao	122	111	233	127

Source: Compiled from Field survey

Table 6: Distribution of Population Labor Force

Village	Employed	Unemployed	Total
Kafr Wahb	486	941	1427
Shijiaqiao	292	36	328

Source: Compiled from Field survey

Table 7: Village Assets

Village	Village Level Assets	Average Village Annual Income
Kafr Wahb	1,650,000 Egy Pounds	1,124, 000 Egy Pounds
Shijiaqiao	9,240,000Yuan	10,004,000 Yuan

Source: Compiled from Field survey

Table 8: Village Infrastructure

Infrastructure	Kafr Wahb	Shijiaqiao
Roads	3150m	5000m
Street gates	2	6
lamps	82	130
Security outposts	1	2
Planted trees	340 trees	1000
Planted flowers/shrubs	1560	3600
Parade Square (Cultural/Physical activities)	1	2
Drainage system	300m	600m
Waste water treatment facility area	70 square meters	40 square meters
Retailers	5	3
Village clinic	1	1
Bridges	-	2
Recycling facility	-	1
Mechanical wells	-	13
Sewage system (Rain and Waste)	-	2570m
Earthquake Meter	-	1
Emergency shelter	-	3

Source: Compiled from Field survey

Table 9: Village Services and Natural Resources

	Kafr Wahb	Shijiaqiao
Educational institutions	1	3
Health clinics	1	1
Farmer training centers	1 (Agri Cooperative Association)	1(the village official office)
Cultural centers	1	2
Agricultural Organizations	1 (Agri Cooperative Association)	1 (Agri Cooperative Association)
Natural Resources	granite, pebbles, sand stone reserves and Shahe River	Nile River, weather and mining

Source: Compiled from Field survey

Table 10: Villagers' Income

	Kafr Wahb	Shijiaqiao
The main source for income	The basic salary and migration	Agricultural production
Per capita income	Under 2500	2500- 5000
Expenditures' routes	Daily subsistence expenses, Medical care and Chemical fertilizer	Daily subsistence expenses and investment in education

Source: Compiled from Field survey

Table 11: The Problems and Recommendations

	Kafr Wahb	Shijiaqiao
The main problem	Sources of Support	Policy implementation
Government policy implementation	Partially achieved	Partially achieved
Government priorities	Production development	Standard Living development
Villagers' needs	Financial support and solve marketing problems	Financial and technical support
Recommendations of rural development	Integration and Coordination with neighboring villages, mobilizing villagers' enthusiasm	Villager's opinion should be taken in consideration, establish a comprehensive policy and give more attention to infrastructure development

Source: Compiled from Field survey

SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS OF RESEARCH

There were several major findings as a result of this research, including a gradual convergence of the top-down and bottom-up development strategies. Long-term implementation of provincial/ state-wide rural and economic development policies and programs has become the norm over short-term. Preference is given to regional cooperation in rural and economic development rather than single community development in both countries. There has been a broadening of the rural community development horizon beyond the traditional farm gate to include economic development activities such as value-added production and job creation through small scale business and industrial set-ups, tourism, and environmental sustainability. Finally, there is a trend towards protecting major socio-cultural life styles of rural communities.

DISCUSSIONS

This study demonstrated the whole situation of rural development policies between Egypt and China through analytical comparison and the case study method .Future development programs should aim at striking a balance between rural and urban communities rather than addressing the development issues of these communities in isolation. Development programs should be geared towards strengthening and interweaving local institutions, infrastructure, economic, socio-cultural, religious and political components of the local system. While the similarities and differences of this study have not considered political changes and their impact on rural development, academics, particularly social scientists, are called upon to take up this challenge. Finally, academics should strive to develop a generally accepted method or procedure for conducting comparative social science research of rural areas.

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